



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

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ISRD 193/09

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, July 14, 2009

Time: 4:30pm
Place: Bush Asia Center
409 Maynard Avenue S.
Basement meeting room

Board Members Present

John Bisbee
Weng Chan
Misun Chung Gerrick
Robert Ha
Bill Lee
Rich Murakami
Joshua Osborne-Klein

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Chair Robert Ha called the meeting to order at 4:38 p.m.

071409.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 23, 2009

MM/SC/JOK/JB

6:0:0 Minutes approved.

071409.2 SOUTH DOWNTOWN CODE ADMENDMENTS & BOARD BRIEFING

Presented by: Susan McLain, City of Seattle Dept. of Planning and Development, and Darby Watson, Dept. of Transportation

Briefing on proposed Code amendments related to sidewalk widths for S. Dearborn Street (DPD), followed by a preliminary discussion about a proposed street design project for S. Dearborn St. (SDOT).

Ms. Frestedt stated that she received public comments via email from Alan Kurimura, from Uwajimaya. She said Mr. Kurimura's email the need for pedestrian improvements and more deliberate planning for Dearborn Street. He encouraged the Board to look at this area closely.

Ms. McLain provided an area map and reiterated that the South Downtown rezone project includes a proposal to expand the ISRD boundary to include the area on the south side of

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Dearborn. She said as part of this work, DPD is considering options for pedestrian improvements, including expanding sidewalk widths along S. Dearborn St. She noted the importance of having this conversation in context of the S. Dearborn St. conceptual design work that Darby Watson, in SDOT, is doing.

Ms. Watson stated that she is working on the Complete Streets Ordinance which looks at pedestrians, bikes, transit and freight for every large project coming out of DPD. She said the City will repave Dearborn the summer of 2010 from I-5 to Airport Way and will include a wider (4') bike lane. She explained the need to look at the whole corridor and the South Livable Downtown plan and the need to take a comprehensive look at Dearborn. She said the streetscape concept planning process will involve working with the ISRD Board and Little Saigon to come up with a design for the entire length of Dearborn St.

Ms. Watson said they will convene a stakeholder group that will contribute to recommended amendments to the Right-of-Way Improvement Manual. She said the amendments will not have to go to Council. They will be part of a DPD Director's Rule and incorporated into the improvement manual. She said the recommendations in the manual are voluntary considered guidance from the community for developers. She noted that next steps will be to form the stakeholder group and develop several urban design alternatives which will be presented to the Board for review. They will then select a preferred alternative and develop a more detailed plan which will be amended to the Right-of-Way Improvement Manual.

4:50 p.m. Mr. Chan arrived.

Ms. Frestedt noted that the ISRD Code does not include specific requirements for sidewalk widths. She asked the Board if there are specific criteria members would like to see addressed in the Guidelines regarding sidewalk widths.

Ms. McLain noted the green street designation on S. Maynard Ave. said that Lane Street is proposed to be a green street, as well. She added that Inter*Im Community Development Association is conducting outreach for the design process. She said the goal of the project is to create a plan that can become part of Right of Way Improvements Manual. She said DPD is hopeful that what will come out of the process is an implement-able list of projects.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked how the Goodwill project impacts what happens on Dearborn.

Ms. Watson indicated that that there wouldn't be a significant impact and they are not looking at changing the roadway configuration so Dearborn would remain four lanes, with a center turn lane and bike lanes. She said there is drainage on both sides so they will likely not be moving curbs. Once the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual is updated, future redevelopment will be subject to new sidewalk recommendations, including set backs that allow for a wider sidewalk.

So far as it pertains to the area of Dearborn that falls within the ISRD boundaries Ms. Frestedt said this discussion is timely in order to make sure that revisions to the Design Guidelines are consistent with regard to guidelines for lighting and street furniture.

Mr. Osborne-Klein noted with regard to street furniture the land use code promotes public safety and any plans for street furniture should take into consideration there is a lot of vagrancy in this area.

Ms. Chung Gerrick agreed and noted the recent bus shelter application which brought out a lot of community members who wanted the shelter to exclude opaque partitions for safety's sake.

Mr. Lee noted this area is the start of the industrial district and asked how many conflicting roles they anticipate.

Ms. Watson said there won't be a lot of improvements until new development happens – such as the Goodwill site. She said this plan will include a list of priorities that the community can use, such as applying for funding to carry out specific projects.

Ms. McLain stated that she was looking for support on the Land Use Code Amendments and input on how sidewalk widths are regulated. She explained the proposal and said that every street is currently assigned a width varying between 14' – 18' (and in some cases closer to 7'-9' east of I-5). She cited Seattle Municipal Code 23.49.022 and 23.66.334 regarding streets and sidewalk widths. She confirmed that the ISRD does not have proscribed sidewalk widths but follows historic width. She noted there is some guidance in the street right of way improvements manual in terms of what goes in the street right of way. She said outside of the ISRD they want to proscribe some sidewalk widths and noted they preferred a wider sidewalk width on S. Dearborn and have proposed a 15' sidewalk width along S. Dearborn St. She said they plan not to touch the area within the ISRD but thought it makes sense to map the width along S. Dearborn within and outside of the ISRD. She said a 15' sidewalk width might be desirable along the length of Dearborn. The Board would still review any sidewalk improvements and construction that happened within the boundaries of the ISRD. She said that current sidewalk widths within the ISRD vary. She explained that Ms. Watson's plan would include adding street trees, landscaping. She noted that the plan states that future development would require 15' sidewalk width.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked if this would constrain ISRD's authority on a case by case basis if the Board wanted to allow a narrower sidewalk.

Ms. McLain said she can write language to allow Board to grant exceptions and would draft examples of what would constitute an exception. She said the 15' sidewalk would only apply along portion of S. Dearborn where mapped.

Mr. Osborne-Klein was generally in favor of wide sidewalks, so long as the Board had the authority to grant exceptions on a case by case basis.

Ms. Frestedt said the Board can consider how the widths of sidewalks impacts merchandise displays and fruit stands. She that said wider sidewalks may make displays more feasible.

Action: I move the ISRD support the general concept for sidewalk widths and emphasize the desire for the ISRD Board to maintain a level of flexibility on a case by case basis.

MM/SC/JOK/RM

7:0:0 Motion carried.

071409.3

GUIDELINE REVISION WORK SESSION

Board discussion regarding proposed design guideline revisions.

Ms. Frestedt distributed the latest version of the Guideline Revisions. She summarized the changes that have been made. She put a placeholder on page 3 for a section to discuss levels of intervention on existing buildings to explain there is a continuum as to how buildings are treated: full scale restoration, rehabilitation of certain elements, and replication of missing pieces. On page 5 she said the definitions were moved from the middle to the end. On page 6,

bullet #4, she had concerns about the proposed language and has heard from Board and community members. She thought there might be a better way to word it and asked for Board input. She said a community member commented that there are existing buildings in the District that may not be desirable for benchmarks for what is appropriate for new development.

Mr. Osborne-Klein said the word “compatible” is vague enough that if there is an empty lot next to a proposed development the Board would not force the developer to put in another empty lot. He suggested “new construction should be compatible with existing development with existing development considering existing factors such as scale, materials and setbacks and the level of development of surrounding parcels”.

Ms. Chung Gerrick suggested starting off with “if adjacent to contributing building...”

Mr. Osborne-Klein suggested adding “and consistent with long term goals or development in the neighborhood”.

Ms. Frestedt referred to page 7 of the draft. She said she has tried to continue on the recommendation to lead with broad based items and then follow with more specific details. There was a discussion about creating a general characteristics statement above each section. She directed the Board to the Boulder, CO Guidelines and noted that the beginning of each section speaks to characteristics of the district. She referred to the objective in Vancouver’s Guidelines which states what is characteristic of the District and the overall intent or desire of what appropriate changes should entail. She said this is just a suggestion and the reason she thought it would be helpful is there are property owners and small business owners who don’t have a background in design and who don’t see the value in the historic district. She said including a characteristics section could reinforce the heritage value of the district. She asked if language along the lines of preferred – prohibited, encouraged – discouraged should be included.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked if when describing the general characteristics of the neighborhood only those that we like should be listed. He suggested starting off with preferred characteristics...what we would like to see, instead of focusing on what the Board does not want to see.

Ms. Frestedt agreed and said that the objective statement could reinforce and promote the types of changes that are desirable.

Ms. Chung Gerrick said she sees the community as a variety of different architectural styles and design and was concerned about the Guidelines being too proscriptive.

Mr. Osborne-Klein suggested adding language in the introduction that these are Guidelines and that the Board has the obligation to uphold the Land Use Code and will use the Guidelines to evaluate applications and proposal but the Board also has the discretion to depart from those guidelines when it thinks that doing so is more consistent with the overall purposes. He said that the guidelines should not consist of rigid mandatory requirements but rather provide a framework for the Board’s decision-making.

Ms. Chung Gerrick agreed with Mr. Osborne-Klein and noting the design of the Wing Luke canopy as an example. She encouraged the use of language that would encourage others to come up with different ideas or options.

There was general agreement that this could encourage more creativity that could be positive to the District. The current Guidelines don't address awning types that more artistic expressions and refer more to a standard awning design.

Ms. Frestedt asked the Board to consider elements in the District that should be encouraged and have been done well in preparation for the next revision discussion. She asked the Board to send her comments electronically so she should include them in her next draft.

Ms. Frestedt continued to summarize changes to the draft, including the organization of specific guidelines. She said that she consolidated a couple of sections due to overlapping content.

Ms. Chung Gerrick suggested combining the section on windows with storefronts.

She said DPD updated State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) client assistance memo and distributed the updated copy to the Board. She noted one of the greatest differences is the addition of thresholds for when SEPA is triggered, listing the number of units and square footage.

5:50 p.m. Adjourn full ISRD Board meeting.

071409.4 ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

071409.41 Milwaukee Hotel
672 S. King St.

Presenter: Chris Koh, property owner

The Architectural Review Committee reviewed proposed paint colors for replacement cornice and was presented with a proposal to install a series of fresh air vents on the alley façade of the Milwaukee Hotel.

Chris Koh presented the proposed cornice replacement colors. He confirmed that the approved colors of the windows and metal detailing. He summarized the rationale behind the section of the colors, stating that it appeared that the windows were originally white.

Mr. Murakami asked if the band was metal and if it was the same material as the original cornice.

Mr. Koh agreed it was metal but didn't know what the original cornice was made of because they have only seen photos of it but said he imagined it would have been the same. He said the band would be painted "Blissful White".

Ms. Frestedt confirmed that the Board has already approved the white color for the windows and band. She stated that she had reservations about painting the cornice white because it would dirty easily and may draw attention to it in a way that it was not originally intended. She said shades of brown or a pinkish brown is a neutral and complementary color to the existing brick.

Mr. Koh showed photos of the original cornice and with the bronze band.

Ms. Chung Gerrick asked what his preference was.

Mr. Koh pointed to one of the two lighter shades in the submitted paint samples.

Ms. Frestedt said the other item to be discussed involves air vents in response to a code requirement for ventilation within the building that will potentially have an impact to the exterior.

Mr. Koh said with the new energy codes they are required to provide a fresh air source in each unit. He said DPD waived this requirement on S. King St. and 7th Avenue S. due to the potential impacts to the exterior. He said there are courtyard units which they are using a vent that goes through the window (which is vinyl and is not visible from any streets). He said they couldn't do this on the alley side so will be using a wood replica of the original window; if they put in any kind of vent it would void the window warranty. He said there is a total of sixteen proposed vents and they will try to make the design blend in so they wouldn't stand out. He provided the manufacturer's picture of the vent that will go inside the window (showed drawing). He said they are required to put one vent per unit. He said they will be put up high so they won't be very visible from ground level. He provided a mock up/sample of what they would create and how it would be attached. It is an ABS material but it could be fabricated in metal.

Ms. Chung Gerrick thought the locations seemed good and was glad they were able to reduce the number of openings. It was noted that it should be as unobtrusive as possible and be a grill. She preferred the metal material option.

Mr. Bisbee said in terms of this installation that the fasteners should be stainless.

Ms. Frestedt said it is important to have construction details because it is a large penetration into the side of the building. She said that although the alley is a secondary façade having 16 penetrations in a masonry wall impacts a significant portion of brick impacted and she noted that the work is not reversible.

Mr. Koh said they are requiring a certain amount of CFM/airflow coming into the unit and this is the smallest opening DPD will allow. If they went to a rectangle it would be 3 ½ x 8" – slightly larger than a brick.

Ms. Frestedt noted that because the work is in the alley there is a willingness to look at alternatives that would not be appropriate on primary facades.

Mr. Murakami said the size of the element be minimized as much as possible so it would be less visually intrusive.

There was discussion about the round and rectangular venting options. Ms. Frestedt asked the applicants to submit drawings and samples of each alternative, nothing that they may state a preferred option. Board members agreed they would like to see sample of the rectangular vent.

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